

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 NEW DE 10868 171114Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 PM-05 NSCE-00 DODE-00
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CINCPAC IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 10868

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS MPOL PK US
SUBJECT: CARRIER VISIT/DEMONSTRATION FOR PAKISTAN VIPS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 6826; (B) NEW DELHI 10646

1. WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ALERT THE GOI TO THE
PROJECTED STEAM-BY INVOLVING "THE ENTERPRISE" AND HIGH-LEVEL
PAKISTANI OFFICIALS, AS SUGGESTED BY UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM
IN ISLAMABAD 6826. THIS WOULD GIVE US SOME CHANCE TO TRY
TO PUT THE EVENT IN PERSPECTIVE AND PERHAPS AND SOMEWHAT DAMPEN
OFFICIAL INDIAN CRITICISM. RECOGNIZING THAT PAKISTANI
MORALE NEEDS SOME BOOSTING, WE ARE CONCERNED TO MINIMIZE
AS FAR AS POSSIBLE WHAT ARE BOUND TO BE ADVERSE INDIAN
REACTIONS.

2. WASHINGTON SHOULD NOT BE MISLED ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE
DISMAY THAT WILL BE CAUSED TO OUR FRIENDS, AND THE RELISH
THAT WILL BE TAKEN BY THEIR OPPONENTS, WHEN THE NEWS OF
THE STEAM-BY BECOMES PUBLIC. WITH RESPECT TO THESE ASPECTS
OF THE SITUATION, OUR EARLIER RESPONSE (REFTEL B) WAS CON-
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SIDERABLY TOO BLAND -- THOUGH WE HOPE THAT FACT MAY HAVE
MADE CLEAR TO OUR COLLEAGUES IN ISLAMABAD THAT THIS EMBASSY
IS NOT CONGENTIALLY INCLINED TO PUT DOWN PAKISTAN INTERESTS,
HOWEVER LEGITIMATE. ACTUALLY, IT IS HARD TO CONCEIVE OF A
PURELY SYMBOLIC U.S. GESTURE MORE LIKELY TO RAISE TEMPERATURES
HERE AND PROVIDE ANTI-AMERICAN AMMUNITION TO THE POLITICAL
OPPOSITION THAN THIS PROSPECTIVE STEAM-BY INVOLVING THE

ENTERPRISE AND HIGH LEVEL PAKISTANI OFFICIALS. NOT ONLY IE
THERE THE INCREASED EDGINESS IN INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS
SINCE THE AFGHAN COUP, WASHINGTON MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT
THE ENTERPRISE HAS BEEN A NASTY WORD HERE SINCE 1971.
FOR INDIANS OF ALL STRIPES, IT IS, BECAUSE OF THE 1971
EVENTS, A SYMBOL OF A MISPLACED AND HEAVY-HANDED U.S.
TENDENCY TO TRY TO HOLD DOWN THIS SOVEREIGN LAND AND DICTATE

POLICIES TO ITS GOVERNMENT. A THIRD COMPLICATION JUST NOW IS
THAT THIS TASK FORCE WILL BE PARADING ITS MUSCLE AT A TIME
WHEN WE ARE VULNERABLE TO RUSSIAN CHARGES THAT THE U.S. IS
NOT SERIOUS ABOUT DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. IN
THE LAST FEW WEEKS SOVIET PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN VERY POINTEDLY
PUTTING THE BLAME ON US FOR SUSPENDING THE US-USSR INDIAN
OCEAN TOALKS. THE MONSOON SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT, JUST
BEGUN, WILL BE PROVIDING A NOISY SOUNDING BOARD FOR THOSE
WHO WILL FEEL ENCOURAGED BY THESE DEVELOPMENTS TO VENT
THEIR SPLEEN OVER THE JANATA GOVERNMENT'S FRIENDLINESS
TOWARD THE USA.

3. WE ACCEPT THAT IT IS TOO LATE TO TRY TO PERSUADE
WASHINGTON TO CANCEL THE STEAM-BY AND WE ARE REALLY NOT
SEEKING TO DO THAT BY THIS MESSAGE, BUT RATHER TO CONVEY
AS ACCURATELY AS WE CAN WHAT WE EXPECT THE NATURE AND
EXTENT OF THE INDIAN REACTION TO IT HO BE. THE PAKISTANI
PRESS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY WANT TO MAKE A BIG THING OF THE
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STEAM-BY AND SO PROBABLY WILL PAKISTAN'S LEADERS. WE
STRONGLY URGE AGAIN THAT THE GOP BE ASKED TO MINIMIZE THE
PUBLICITY AND THAT OUR OWN HANDLING OF THE EVENT BE AS LOW-
KEY AS POSSILBE. ASREFTTEL (B) INDICATES, WHEN AUTHORIZED
BY WASHINGTON, WE WOULD PLAN TO APPROACH THE GOI AT THE MEA
JOINT SECRETARY LEVEL IN A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO PLAY THE
EVEN DOWN.

4. FINALLY, WE SUGGEST THAT OUR DACCA EMBASSY SHOULD ALSO BE
KEYED ON THE IMPENDING STEAM-BY AND THE GOB ALSO GIVEN
ADVANCE NOTICE OF IT.
GOHEEN

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